

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 RABAT 02366 300843Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 ACDA-07 ARA-06
PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 H-01 PRS-01
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 /097 W
-----301716Z 078306 /42

R 291603Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1765
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 2366

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR MO CG
SUBJECT: MOROCCO AND THE ZAIRE INTERVENTION

1. KING HASSAN'S DECISION ANNOUNCED APRIL 8 TO SEND MOROCCAN FORCES TO ZAIRE SURPRISED MOST MOROCCANS AS MUCH AS IT DID FOREIGN OBSERVERS. THE KING ONCE AGAIN DEMONSTRATED HIS PENCHANT FOR THE GRAND GESTURE PREPARED IN COMPLETE SECRECY, ALONG THE LINES OF THE 1975 GREEN MARCH.

2. IN THE CASE OF ROYAL DECISIONS IN ISOLATION, HOWEVER, OTHER ELEMENTS OF HIS SOCIETY DO NOT NECESSARILY FEEL COMPELLED TO ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES. THE CENTER AND LEFT OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES, FOR EXAMPLE, AT FIRST STUNNED, HAVE SINCE MADE CLEAR BY EDITORIAL SILENCE THEIR LACK OF APPROBATION. IN PRIVATE THEY COMPLAIN OVER SUPPORT OF A "CORRUPT" ZAIRIAN REGIME AND THE MORE LEFTIST ELEMENTS REMAIN CONVINCED THAT THE DECISION WAS TAKEN AT THE BEHEST OF THE U.S., FRANCE, AND OTHER "IMPERIALISTS", THUS CASTING MOROCCO IN THE IMAGE OF IMPERIALISM'S TOOL. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY RECOGNIZE THAT OUT OF CONSIDERATIONS OF
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 RABAT 02366 300843Z

PATRIOTISM THE DECISION CANNOT BE CRITICIZED PUBLICLY WHILE MOROCCAN TROOPS ARE IN THE FIELD, AND IN ANY CASE THEY ARE NOT WILLING TO TAKE ON THE KING PUBLICLY. PRUDENCE UNDOUBTEDLY IS ALSO OPERATIVE, AS THEY WOULD NOT WANT TO HAVE CRITICIZED THE INTERVENTION IN THE EVENT IT TURNS OUT SUCCESSFULLY. ONLY THE EXILE USFP OPPOSITION IN EUROPE, NOTABLY MOHAMED EL BASRI, HAS PUBLICLY CRITICIZED THE INTERVENTION. MEANWHILE OPPOSITION

MEMBERS EXPRESS VAGUE CONCERN THAT ZAIRE MAY UPSET THE UPCOMING PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, SET TENTATIVELY FOR LATE MAY.

3. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN IS AN EMERGING SENSE OF PRIDE AS MOROCCAN BATTLEFIELD "SUCSESSES" HAVE UNFOLDED. THE MOROCCAN BELIEVES HIMSELF A WARRIOR AND LIKES TO CITE MILITARY EXPLOITS IN WORLD WAR II, INDOCHINA, THE UN CONGO PEACEKEEPING FORCES IN THE EARLY 60'S, AND THE 1973 ARAB-ISRAELI WAR. THERE IS LASO SMUGNESS THAT MOROCCO IS DOING THE WEST'S -- AND PARTICULARLY THE U.S.'S -- JOB IN ZAIRE BY RESISTING SOVIET/CUBAN INSURSIONS INTO AFRICA. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS GROWING SENTIMENT -- LACED WITH SOME APPREHENSION -- THAT MOROCCAN FORCES SHOULD DISENGAGE AND RETURN HOME IMMEDIATELY UPON EXPELLING THE KATANGANS FROM SHABA.

4. INTERNATIONAL REACTION HAS BEEN MIXED, BUT THE GOM APPARENTLY CALCULATES THAT IT HAS LITTLE TO LOSE AND POSSIBLY MUCH TO GAIN BY ITS ZAIRE ACTION. IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT, THE GOM PROBABLY SEES ITS INTERVENTION AS FURTHERING THE MODERATE/RADICAL SPLIT IN THE OAU, AN ORGANIZATION INCREASINGLY DISDAINED. THE GOM ALSO APPARENTLY HOPES TO WIN OVER AFRICAN FENSE-SITTERS TO SUPPORT OF ITS SAHARA POLICY. IN ARAB CIRCLES, THE RESERVE OF MORE RADICAL STATES, ESPECIALLY IRAQ, HAS BEEN MORE THAN OFFSET BY THE APPROBATION OF THE SAUDIS, EGYPTIANS AND SUDANESE, WHO APPEAR TO SHARE MOROCCAN VIEWS ON AFRICAN GEOPOLITICS. AS REGARDS THE SAHARA, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE CUBANS, LIBYANS, AND PERHAPS EVEN THE SOVIETS WILL SHIFT FROM DISCREET, INDIRECT SUPPORT OF THE POLISARIO IN THE FACE OF THE KING'S HARSH APRIL 18 PRESS CONFERENCE ATTACKS (RABAT 2183). MEANWHILE, THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 RABAT 02366 300843Z

ALGERIANS HAVE BEEN CURIOUSLY SUBDUED IN THEIR CONDEMNATION OF THE INTERVENTION. AS FOR FRANCE, RELATIONS HAVE NEVER BEEN BETTER.

5. IN SUMMARY, KING HASSAN'S DECISION SO FAR APPEARS TO BE PAYING DIVIDENDS AND, BARRING ANY BATTLEFIELD DISASTER, COULD BE A SUBSTANTIAL NET GAIN FOR HASSAN INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY. IF THE TROOPS COME HOME SOON AND ELECTIONS ARE NOT DELAYED, THERE WILL BE NO BASIS FOR OPPOSITION CRITICISM. THE GOM SEEMS LIKELY IN TIME TO SEE MEDIATION AS A WAY OUT, ALTHOUGH PRESENTLY IS INCLINED NOT TO TAKE THE NIGERIAN EFFORT SERIOUSLY.

6. AS FOR U.S.-MOROCCAN RELATIONS, MANY OF OUR MOROCCAN CONTACTS ARE VEXED AND PERPLEXED BY OUR PUBLIC RETICENCE TO SUPPORT THEIR INTERVENTION, TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING IN HELPING OUR FRIEND MOBUTU, AND OVER WHAT THEY SEE AS CONFLICTING STATEMENTS FROM U.S. OFFICIALS ON OUR AFRICAN POLICY. ON THE FIRST COUNT, THE HABIB VISIT AND SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS BY AMB YOUNG (RABAT 2085, STATE 093804) HAVE HELPED CLEAR THE AIR. ON U.S. AID TO ZAIRE, THE KING CLEARLY UNDERSTANDS U.S. DOMESTIC

CONCERNS, HAVING ACKNOWLEDGED THEM IN HIS APRIL 18 PRESS
CONFERENCE (RABAT 2183). MANY MOROCCANS NEVERTHELESS CONTINUE
TO TELL US WE SHOULD BE DOING MORE. WE WILL THUS NEED TO KEEP
MOROCCANS CONCERNS FULLY IN MIND TO PREVENT ADVERSE IMPACT ON
OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERVENTION, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977RABAT02366
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770152-0484
Format: TEL
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977044/aaaaacxk.tel
Line Count: 122
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2754568
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOROCCO AND THE ZAIRE INTERVENTION
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CG, MO, (HASSAN II)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/399d2aa2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009